

Warning Signs

Stroke

...is a blocked or ruptured blood vessel inside the head, cutting off blood supply to part of the brain. If the supply is blocked for too long, part of the brain can be permanently damaged. Mini-stroke (TIA) is a temporary blockage - it can happen again.

Feels like:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg - on one side of the body.
- Sudden trouble seeing with one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, falling down.
- Sudden severe headache - "the worst headache of your whole life" - with no known cause.

What to do:

If you are alone, call 911 immediately. Don't hang up!
If you can't speak, the 911 operator will trace the call & send help.
Do not wait to call, and do not go anywhere.

If you think someone near you is having a stroke, act FAST by testing their Face, Arms, and Speech in Time:

- **Face:** Ask them to smile or show you their teeth - does one side of the face droop or stay still?
- **Arms:** Ask them to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downwards?
- **Speech:** Ask them to tell you their name, address and phone number. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- **Time:** Know what time it started.
They need medical diagnosis and treatment within three hours if they have any of the above.
Call 911, or drive them to the Emergency Department immediately!

Heart attack

...is a blocked blood vessel that cuts off blood supply to the heart muscle. If the supply is blocked for too long, part of the heart muscle can be permanently damaged.

Feels like:

- Bad heartburn.
- Pressure or crushing pain in your chest.
- Pain that extends from your chest into the jaw or left arm.
- Chest tightness making it hard to breathe, lasting longer than a few seconds.

You could also have:

- Weakness.
- Lightheadedness.
- Sudden overwhelming exhaustion.
- Sweating.
- Nausea or vomiting.

What to do:

1. Take 1 regular aspirin, or chew 4 baby aspirin (total, 325mg).
2. Get to Emergency Department of nearest hospital.
Do not drive yourself!
3. If you have used *Viagra*, *Levitra* or *Cialis* in the last 24 hours, tell the Emergency Room staff right away (some heart attack medicines can interact with these).

Preventing heart attacks and strokes

- Take a baby aspirin every day, between age 50 and 80.
- Keep blood pressure under 140/90 (less if you are diabetic or have lower kidney function).
- Keep your body mass index under 30. To find out what you'd weigh, ask your doctor or see a BMI chart online. Someone who is 5'7" would need to weigh less than 190 lbs, for example.
- Don't smoke cigarettes or use tobacco.
- Don't drink more than 2 regular-sized alcoholic drinks daily.